

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

NOVELS.

BUT YET A WOMAN. A Novel. By ARTHUR SAYER. BURKE HARDY. 12mo. pp. 348. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

SHANDON BELLS. A Novel. By WILLIAM BLACK. 12mo. pp. 414. Harper & Brothers.

A DAUGHTER OF THE PHILISTINES. (No Name series.) 12mo. pp. 325. Roberts Brothers.

The story of Professor Hardy, of Dartmouth, whose title stands at the head of our list, is something of a surprise. The scene is laid in France, all the principal characters are Parisians of the present day, and the book reads at times as if it were a remarkably clever translation from the French. We say this not in disparagement but in praise. There is a certain refinement in the portraits, a subtlety never pushed too far—in the indication of motives and impulses, a grace and suggestiveness in the reflective passages on the boundary line between sentiment and philosophy, which are common enough in French literature but rare in our own. Moreover, the author has caught the spirit of a society far removed from anything we find in this country or anything the travelling American is likely to encounter abroad. His personages include legitimists of the middle class, a quiet old scholar, a sensible and amiable priest, a lovely and pious young girl, and the story ends with an excellent description of the ceremony of taking the veil. It is singular to note how vividly he reflects not only the conversation and way of life of these people, but their line of thought and the quality of their virtues. He is not of them; and yet he knows how the world looks from their point of view, and, what is more, he can show us their best side. This, of course, is a great gain. We only shut our eyes to the sun when we assume that all who do not think with us are fools or bigots. If Professor Hardy had aimed at no other purpose than the truthful and in a certain sense sympathetic representation of an interesting and important class—that is to say, a representation of it as it looks from the inside, and not as it strikes a hostile observer—he would deserve our congratulations upon his success. But he has also told a delicate love story with considerable constructive art, and though we may find fault with a conclusion hardly in keeping with what we have seen of the principal actor in the last chapter, we at least have not to complain that anything has been left unfinished. The moral lessons are clear and elevated; and finally the book possesses the charm of a polished and often epigrammatic style.

The reviewer's first impulse on laying down one of Mr. Black's stories is to praise its freshness. The catalogue of his books is growing long; but the epithet is as apt as ever, and readers, we fancy, will not soon tire of his enthusiastic love of nature and his healthy young lovers. No writer of our day understands so well how to unite narrative with description. It is a strong proof of his ability in this respect that one never wishes to skip his descriptions. They are vivid without prolixity; and often, as they recur in the development of the tale, they do not seem to impede the movement of events; on the contrary, they become easily and inseparably associated with the actors and their actions, just as in reality the cliff, or the brook, or the wood-path, or the city street becomes coupled in our memory with the persons and the incidents that have affected our lives. The Irish scenery of the present novel is painted with all Mr. Black's vigor and rapidity and with that rare poetical insight which distinguishes the work of the true imaginative artist from the dull realism of the catalogues who is merely patient and observant. Here is a bit of entomological life which has an unmistakable poetical quality. The speaker is a Scotch artist:

"Did ye ever see a kingfisher fishing?"
"Not they're not common with us in the south of Ireland."

"Man, I watched one for near half an hour last week, and the whole of that time he never stirred a feather. He was on a stone in the middle of the water. I was in a boat that was hanging over him. I was beginning to doubt but that somebody had snuffed him, and put him there to make a fool of folk, when, snap! down went his head and neck, and the next second there he was with a small fish crosswise in his bill. Then he twitted his head, and, while he was striking the fish on the gills, there was no fish visible; and then a quick streak of blue flame went down across the ripples; that was the gentleman himself going off in a flash of glory, as it were!"

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